

## **Full Council– 12 October 2023 Public Participation**

### **1. Question from Edd Moore** Damers Eco Crew. (Edd Moore, Eco Coordinator)

We have been campaigning with support from DTAG and Sustrans for a safe cycle route/lane between Dorchester and Poundbury for the past 12 months. This was something that was promised by Dorset Council and The Duchy in 2017 but sadly hasn't happened.

We have the support of Jason Bowerman, Estate Manager at the Duchy who wants to get round a table with everyone to get the wheels in motion for this project.

We put a questionnaire together and found:

- 81% said they would use the route other than the school run.
- 72% said they would use a cycle lane to get to Poundbury

We wrote a letter to Chris Peck, Head of Highways who at first dismissed the idea saying Poundbury and Dorchester were in a better position than most towns and cities in Dorset thanks to the environmental work of our school. They were focusing on Bournemouth and Ferndown where they could make a difference with bigger impact.

We wrote back to Chris and eventually he agreed to a meeting to discuss the route during May Half Term but only with Mr Moore, Eco Coordinator and DTAG.

From this meeting with Chris Peck Mr Moore told us it could take 5 - 10 years to complete depending on funding, when it becomes available. We will all be at University by the time it might be ready to use.

It was agreed that the Dorchester War Memorial to Dorchester West Station Bridge would be the first phase. Phase 2 from Bridge to Damers First School, then Phase 3 to Monkey Jump Roundabout. Phase 1 needs to go through Public Consultation first.

All these phases will support other cycle routes and lanes within the town and afar too connecting up cycle lanes/routes that are in place or could be in place.

We have been measuring the air quality around our school and neighbouring roads with Sustrans over the last 4 weeks to add more evidence to our case.

We do not want to wait 5 - 10 years to have a safe cycle lane/route that was already promised to Damers First School, local schools, Dorchester and Poundbury in 2017. We have already waited 6 years!

**Why can't there be a safe cycle lane/route from Dorchester Town to Poundbury built in the next 12 months?**

## **Response by Cllr R Bryan**

It's positive to hear of such enthusiasm from Damers School for improvements for walking and cycling.

Dorset Council supports a dedicated team from Sustrans who work with schools, including Damers, on promoting sustainable transport, including holding regular events and activities with students. We've already constructed a route linking the Victoria Park area of Dorchester to the new school site in Poundbury in advance of its opening, including a new crossing of Bridport Road at Whitfield Road which was completed in 2017. This is well used by children walking, scooting and cycling to both the school, and for other trips in the area.

We continue to work with the Dorchester Transport Action Group on potential routes between Dorchester town centre and the existing active travel routes near Poundbury. We are looking to see if funding from central government could be made available for such projects.

Dorset Council teams are currently working on schemes to improve links to schools in many parts of the county, including Dorchester, and I very much hope that we can secure funding for similar projects, such as the link between Poundbury and Dorchester town centre, in the future.